

Tinicum, PA – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) joined a representative from AAA Mid-Atlantic, Catherine L. Rossi outside Tinicum Township's Administrative Building today, to express his dismay at the lack of action taken to resolve the parking situation at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) for drivers picking up passengers. Following the sudden announcement of immediate vigorous enforcement of new "no parking," "standing" or "stopping" signs on the highway ramps around the airport, the Congressman wrote to the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) on Tuesday. He urged city, state and airport officials to immediately revise "the ticketing and signage policies for drivers awaiting passenger pick-up at the Philadelphia International Airport." FHWA and PennDOT have not responded with any proposals.

The Congressman conveyed his appreciation for Ms. Rossi's commitment to a safe and convenient waiting area for drivers despite the lack of cooperation from other parties involved. In addition, he thanked Philadelphia Deputy Mayor Rina Cutler, who asked for a September 14 meeting with FHWA and PennDOT, but emphasized that the relevant parties have waited far too long to address this issue and that there should be a sense of urgency.

"I applaud the actions of the State Police to ensure the safety of those they have sworn to protect and serve, but the fact that the State Police had to take such actions, which were unfair to our citizens, was a failure in leadership by officials who have known about and not resolved the parking issue at Philadelphia International for more than five years," said Congressman Sestak. "I appreciate Deputy Mayor Cutler joining me to call for PennDOT, Federal Highway Administration, and the City of Philadelphia to come together to finally find a solution. This is simply about good governance and having the agencies involved take initiative and show some leadership to resolve the situation in a safe and convenient way."

"Police are doing their job," said Ms. Rossi. "What we don't want is motorists driving around the airport holding cell phones to their ears because they have no legitimate place to pull over and they can't find the cell phone lot. That's dangerously distracting and telling them to pull over to make a call isn't going to cut it if enforcement is underway."

Philadelphia International Airport annually accommodates 31.8 million passengers and 500,000 flights, but continues to be without a cell phone parking lot within the airport, while unclear signage with fine print tells motorists to "Use Bartram Ave. Park & Ride Lot to wait for arriving flights" without any directions to that location.

Approximately half of the 50 largest airports in the country, and many others, have taken appropriate measures to ensure adequate security while affording drivers and passengers the courtesy and convenience of a clearly marked and easily accessible cell phone lot. Congressman Sestak continues to call on Philadelphia International Airport to do the same.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*